

Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory Committee (MAC)  
September 22, 2007, Carissa School  
Meeting notes

**ATTENDEES**

MAC: Neil Havlik, Ellen Cypher, Bob Pavlik, Carl Twisselman, Jim Patterson, Michael Khus-Zarate, Ray Hatch, Dale Kuhnle.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Tim Smith, Duane Christian, Ryan Cooper, Kathy Sharum, Bob Wick, Steve Larson, Johna Hurl, Karen Doran, David Christy.

Managing Partners: Tom Maloney, The Nature Conservancy; Deb Hillyard, California Department of Fish and Game

Public: Nancy Ryan, Friends of the Carrizo; Terry Frewin, Lorraine Unger, Sierra Club; Cal French, Alice Bond, The Wilderness Society; Susie Geiger, Occidental Petroleum; Dennis Fox, California Native Grasslands Association; Irv McMillan, Lodema Hatch, Pat Veasart, Pilulau Khus, Pati Nolen, Gordon Hayes.

Neil Havlik, MAC chair, welcomed the public and opened the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves. BLM staff used the PowerPoint presentation posted at **WEBSITE** for the meeting.

Tim Smith, BLM Bakersfield Field Office manager, discussed the July field trip and said he looked forward to working with all the various parties to develop the Resource Management Plan (RMP). He reviewed his career with BLM, most recently as manager of the 1.3 million acre Lake Havasau, AZ, area.

Johna Hurl, BLM Carrizo manager, said BLM looked at public comments and met with the managing partners to develop the preliminary range of alternatives.

Ray Hatch asked how the 1996 management plan's goals and objectives would be used for the new plan.

Johna Hurl said the No Action Alternative would be a continuation of current management. Relevant parts of the 1996 plan would be carried forward.

Ray Hatch asked how availability of BLM resources would tie in with the plan's goals and objectives.

Bob Wick said an implementation plan for the next five years will be developed to set objectives and prioritize them.

Alice Bond asked how long it would take to develop the implementation plan.

Bob Wick said it should be done within six months after the RMP is enacted.

Neil Havlik asked how subregions would fit into the range of alternatives. Tom Maloney reviewed a map of the proposed subregions. BLM and the Managing Partners discussed how the subregions and alternatives will interact in the planning process.

**Vegetation and Wildlife**

Kathy Sharum gave the Vegetation and Wildlife portions of the PowerPoint presentation.

Ray Hatch asked how objectives and actions would tie together.

Carl Twisselman asked how a "viable population" is defined.

Deb Hillyard said population numbers for some species are defined in a recovery plan.

The objective is to put species on a path to recovery so they are no longer listed. Species

are in jeopardy when they are in danger of not being a self-sustaining population. The recovery plan sets a threshold to de-list the species.

Ellen Cypher said population trends and annual variations are considered.

Deb Hillyard said the preferred alternative can pick among the entire range from passive to active management.

Neil Havlik said the plan needs to capture the idea of local populations such as shrub communities and their management strategies.

Bob Wick said the final chapter of the plan will contain the specific strategies.

Deb Hillyard said the intent of the plan is to capture rare, unusual and natural communities.

Alice Bond said the language should be clarified to state the goal is to “enhance” native and indigenous species and communities.

Pilulau Khus said there should be attention to the relationship between plants.

Nancy Ryan asked if there would be a “menu” at the end of the plan so the various programs could be reviewed by subregion.

Bob Wick said it hasn’t been decided how the plan would be formatted, but there would be a way to review it by subregion.

Jim Patterson asked where assessment and monitoring would be included.

Kathy Sharum said some broad monitoring measures would be incorporated in the plan.

Bob Wick said actions in the plan will require monitoring; determining progress toward objectives requires monitoring.

Dennis Fox asked if there would be monitoring for species of concern versus the full biological community.

Since meeting objectives is contingent on BLM having the resources to do work, Pat Veersart asked if there would be analysis of what work BLM is capable of performing.

Bob Wick said there would be a socio-economic analysis in the plan and more analysis in the implementation plan. The plan could be used as a tool to get additional resources such as grants. The impacts assessment will discuss what work could be done with existing resources.

Tim Smith said the focus will narrow through the planning process. The plan will look 10-15 years out, with a more detailed business plan for the next five years. Specific actions will be developed and prioritized through the business plan to use in planning work and looking for additional resources.

Michael Khus-Zarate asked if the language in the vegetation and wildlife alternatives was taken from scoping comments.

BLM staff said alternatives were developed based on comments during scoping and also from other sources such as scientific studies and discussions among the partners.

Pilulau Khus asked what would happen in the event of a feed shortage – would BLM feed antelope?

BLM staff noted the alternative action of feeding antelope was included.

Neil Havlik asked if there was discontinuous use of areas by plovers; some areas aren’t used in wet years when there is more vegetation.

Kathy Sharum said there is some research that shows plovers move to farm land when there is too much vegetation in the areas they traditionally use. There is a concern about the effects of farm chemicals on the plovers in those areas, though.

Johna Hurl said there are a number of plover sites around the Carrizo and some sites will remain open even if others have vegetation.

Deb Hillyard said the plover objective will need to be revisited.

Neil Havlik asked that the rationale be explained in the alternative.

Bob Wick said the impact analysis will include analyzing what happens if there are not plovers on the Carrizo.

Neil Havlik said there are certain key species that should be closely monitored out of many species on the Carrizo.

Carl Twisselman said the plan shouldn't be too prescriptive on issues such as monitoring. BLM should be given latitude to manage based on changing conditions and new information.

Nancy Ryan asked if there was a catchall term that would take care of future situations.

Steve Larson said that would be captured in the goals and objectives.

Dennis Fox asked if the issues of vectors such as disease vectors and predators such as mountain lions would be considered.

BLM staff said the issue of vectors was captured during scoping comments on valley fever and predation will be addressed.

## **Cultural**

Duane Christian presented the PowerPoint section on Cultural.

Carl Twisselman asked what qualified as historical.

Duane Christian said things must be at least 50 years old to qualify as historic under Federal law.

Neil Havlik said the range of alternatives in the presentation didn't reflect the full spectrum of action versus no action. He also said combines and other old farm implements should be preserved.

Duane Christian said the plan does contain a section on preserving farm implements.

MAC members, the public and BLM staff engaged in a discussion about alternatives for access to Painted Rock. The range of alternatives shown in the presentation ranged from allowing access by permit or on tours to closing access. Ray Hatch asked why the alternatives didn't include open access.

MAC members who were on the MAC in 2004 said at that time the MAC recommended limiting access to permits or tours, which led BLM to show it as one alternative. The no-action alternative shows open access for part of the year.

Carl Twisselman said access previously was controlled by the owner when it was private property. Restricting access to permits or tours could remove a valuable educational tool. Ellen Cypher said there is a larger issue: should the MAC revisit decisions made previously.

Bob Pavlik suggested "programmatic" access using displays, film, etc., be considered rather than physical access.

Michael Khus-Zarate said when the MAC considered the issue in 2004 it was in the context of an immediate issue rather than an RMP issue.

Pilulau Khus discussed the importance of Painted Rock to the Native American community said that the recommendation was taken to the monument's Native American Advisory Council. Reversing the recommendation would damage the credibility of the MAC.

Neil Havlik said the MAC expected BLM to proceed with implementing the recommendation at that time.

On a split vote, the MAC voted to continue the existing recommendation. Neil Havlik, Michael Khus-Zarate, Ellen Cypher and Bob Pavlik voted in favor; Dale Kuhnle, Carl Twisselman and Ray Hatch voted in opposition.

Ray Hatch asked that the MAC be informed of any recommendations previously made by the MAC.

### **Recreation/Interpretation**

Ryan Cooper presented the PowerPoint section on Recreation/Interpretation.

### **Fire**

Johna Hurl presented the PowerPoint section on Fire.

Alice Bond asked if there would be maps available.

Bob Wick said there would be maps in the Fire Management Plan.

Irv McMillan said there should be a full-suppression alternative for fire. Saltbrush has no tolerance for fire. He questioned the value of fire as a management tool and whether the objective “recognize the role of fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent” is correct.

Pilulau Khus suggested BLM research how fire was used by the indigenous people and consider redoing the alternatives.

### **Grazing**

Karen Doran presented the PowerPoint section on Grazing.

Pati Nolen quoted language from the monument Proclamation that monument lands are withdrawn from leasing. BLM staff said that language refers to minerals rather than livestock. Pati Nolen also said outside interests are involved, quoting a news article that said an Idaho group took credit for killing the World Heritage Site designation for the monument. She cited a number of problems she sees with grazing.

Dennis Fox said cows are a cause of global warming and there could be an accommodation among the various interests by grazing using “tofus” instead of sheep or cattle. Since they are in open pastures they would be free-range “tofus.” He suggested BLM look at grazing with a mix of animal species and noted some opposition is for aesthetic reasons rather than scientific reasons. Perennials are the first plants to emerge, followed by exotic species and annuals. By timing intensive grazing and rest cycles, livestock can remove exotics while perennials will re-grow from their taproots. Intensive grazing followed by rest is the natural cycle followed by wildlife herds such as zebras, elk and antelope. Managers should take the religious and emotional aspects out of grazing management and do it on a scientific basis.

Terry Frewin asked why a leasee would relinquish a lease.

Dale Kuhnle said there are a number of reasons such as a death in the family or economics.

In response to a question, Karen Doran said BLM can cancel a lease for specific reasons such as degradation of the resource.

Pat Veesart asked for the definition of Rangeland Health Standards and asked why BLM used them instead of other biological indicators.

Karen Doran said the term encompasses a number of biological factors such as soil, water and wildlife.

Bob Wick said there is interplay between grazing, vegetation and species. BLM could use more restrictive requirements than the Rangeland Health Standards.

Karen Doran said the standards are bureau-wide standards that vary by area.

Alice Bond suggested the language in the presentation be revised to say lands will be managed to “meet Rangeland Health Standards at a minimum” rather than “meet minimum Rangeland Health Standards.”

Cal French said the Proclamation doesn’t say grazing must continue on the monument.

BLM staff said if there is grazing, it must follow grazing regulations.

In response to a question, BLM staff said the scientific advisors would meet in the next few weeks to discuss research. There had been some discussion about asking them to review parts of the RMP. Members of the public asked if the meeting is open to the public and Neil Havlik asked if the MAC could be notified.

Deb Hillyard said the advisors were asked to review project proposals and help set research priorities. Reviewing the RMP would be outside the original scope.

Pilulau Khus said she hoped the plan would not be developed strictly on science and bureaucratic requirements. Concerns expressed by the public came from their hearts. She asked if the decision that Taylor Grazing Act Section 15 leases could not be converted to Taylor Grazing Act Section 5 permits was based on legal advice. Section 15 leases add value to private property, which conflicts with the public purpose of the monument. Section 5 permits do not add value to the land. She believes the interpretation Section 15 leases cannot be converted is incorrect. Many members of the public are interested in more flexibility and more opportunities for public input on grazing.

Bob Wick said BLM will clarify the issue of converting Section 15 leases in the plan. Anything BLM does must be legally defensible. BLM can close an area to leasing if it doesn’t meet management objectives, but the Section 15 leasee must be given an opportunity to meet those objectives within the lease rather than converting to a Section 5 permit.

Neil Havlik asked for clarification on “available” versus “not available” and on the information in a residual dry matter document.

Deb Hillyard said the University of California guidelines on residual dry matter are contained in the grazing standards. The guidelines were developed to protect soil from erosion and produce forage for livestock weight gain. The latter is not part of the monument objectives. Monument standards are higher than the university guidelines.

Neil Havlik asked if BLM can manage so there is a functional equivalency for a Section 15 lease and Section 5 permit.

BLM staff said vegetation and wildlife standards can be applied under either form.

Pat Veesart asked if BLM looks at the pastures each year to determine the amount of allowable grazing.

Karen Doran said BLM develops terms and conditions the operator must follow. Leases are not extended based on the inability to graze some years due to lack of forage. Section 5 permittees voluntarily contribute an amount equal to the grazing fee for Section 15 leasees.

Deb Hillyard said the same requirements determine how BLM manages the lease regardless of whether it is a Section 15 lease or a Section 5 permit.

Nancy Ryan asked if the requirements in the new management plan will apply retroactively.

Karen Doran said leases must be in conformance with BLM regulations, so the new plan will apply to the leases.

Pat Veesart said there have been situations where leasees did not follow directions and asked how BLM could build in assurances regulations will be enforced.

Bob Wick said the plan is a legal document that leasees are obligated to follow.

Steve Larson said the monument proclamation has brought in additional resources.

Bob Wick said people can look at an established grazing program at Las Cienegas National Conservation Area

[http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/blm\\_special\\_areas/ncarea/lascienegas.html](http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/ncarea/lascienegas.html)

Alice Bond asked if a 10-year Carrizo grazing study would be shared with the public.

Deb Hillyard said the study has not been published, but was presented at a conference of the Ecological Society of America. It may be discussed by the science advisors.

Ellen Cypher said not all grazing within the monument boundary is under BLM jurisdiction. There are private inholdings in the Carrizo and grazing there may not meet BLM standards.

Neil Havlik asked for clarification on the definitions of “good,” “normal,” and “poor” in a soil survey and asked that numbers in the survey be reviewed.

### **Wilderness**

Ryan Cooper presented the PowerPoint section on Wilderness.

Cal French said he hoped that some areas that have been monitored receive a wilderness designation. He is concerned about an old road used to access a repeater and guzzler on Caliente Mountain, and also about state ownership of the top of Caliente Mountain.

Bob Wick said Congress must designate an area as Wilderness, but BLM can manage for wilderness characteristics using the planning process and achieve the same objective. Six additional areas mentioned in one alternative have already been inventories.

### **Visual**

Bob Wick presented the PowerPoint section on Visual.

Carl Twisselman asked if visual designations were subjective based on someone’s opinion of what looks good.

Bob Wick said there are elements of form, line, color and texture that are measurable and used in a visual contrast rating process.

### **Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Wild and Scenic Rivers**

Bob Wick presented the PowerPoint sections on Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

### **Travel**

Ryan Cooper presented the PowerPoint section on Travel.

Carl Twisselman asked if the plan will address requirements for private inholdings.

Johna Hurl said that would be addressed in conjunction with the road network.

Neil Havlik suggested BLM look at road loop systems to improve use and allow closure of other roads.

Bob Pavlik suggested BLM look at a shuttle system for transportation in the monument. Ray Hatch suggested gateway communities could be points for visitor shuttles. The presentation will be corrected to show that equestrian access only on designated routes is under the more restrictive alternative rather than the less restrictive alternative.

### **Minerals**

Bob Wick presented the PowerPoint section on Minerals.

Neil Havlik suggested any funds from development of existing leases go into a mitigation fund to repair damage from previous leases.

Dennis Fox said BLM should fill in “shotholes” where companies set off explosive charges in searching for oil and gas.

Ray Hatch said BLM should have a goal of exchanging mineral leases on the monument for leases off the monument.

Steve Larson said BLM has had a priority of acquiring surface inholdings, but has acquired subsurface rights if possible with the purchase. BLM will pursue subsurface rights if there are no willing sellers for surface rights. Some companies have approached BLM about exchanges in and out of the monument, and BLM is considering them.

MAC members agreed to support BLM’s acquisition or exchange of mineral rights.

BLM staff said land purchases and exchanges will be addressed in the realty section.

A member of the public suggested Kern County Habitat Mitigation funds might be a funding source to acquire lands.

Ellen Cypher said she is a trustee for the program and would mention it at the next meeting.

The next MAC meeting was scheduled for January 26, 2008. Ray Hatch asked that materials be provided a week before the meeting so MAC members have time to review them.

There will be a tour of the east side of the monument on November 3, 2007.

### **Closing remarks**

In closing remarks, Dale Kuhnle said he was disappointed opponents of grazing left before his rebuttal. Although livestock grazing is allowed, it is not freely used. He now has 18,000 acres available in his lease compared to 32,000 acres in 1980. Of that, he has grazed 1,700 acres for less than three months since 2002, which amounts to less than 3 percent of his original allotment. The least productive pastures have been designated not available and dry years have made other pastures not available. It has not been economical to maintain water systems in some pastures with reduced grazing. Even if Section 15 leases were converted to Section 5 permits, operators would continue to pay an equivalent amount to BLM. He would like to see leases where operators are given the management objectives and latitude to determine how to meet those objectives.

In response to a question, BLM staff estimate there are four or five livestock operators with pastures in or partially in the monument.

Ray Hatch said the City of Taft included literature on the monument in its display at the Kern County Fair and there was significant interest. He invited attendees to participate in the National Public Lands Day event September 29.

Michael Khus-Zarate said the MAC needs to maintain consistency. Reversing previous recommendations such as Painted Rock access could damage its credibility.

Neil Havlik thanked MAC members and public for their courtesy during the discussions and commented the meetings are providing a publicly transparent process in developing the plan.